

Message Text

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EXDIS

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TAGS: PEPR, CF, XA, ZJ, UR, PINS
SUBJECT: S. AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

REF: STATE 153145

1. AS LONG-TIME PARTISAN OF DESIRABILITY OF CONSULTING WITH SENIOR AFRICANS, I FULLY SUPPORT CONCEPT PROPOSED PARA 3 BUT WOULD CERTAINLY WIDEN IT TO INCLUDE NUMBER OF OTHER LEADERS, ESPECIALLY FRANCOPHONES. PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS WHAT WE TALK TO THEM ABOUT.

2. REFTTEL SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT AFRICANS DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE ON THEIR CONTINENT. I VENTURE TO SUGGEST THAT THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY SO. IT ALSO SUGGEST THAT AFRICANS ACT AS AFRICANS TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS. BUT THIS PRESUPPOSES A CONSIDERABLY GREATER DEGREE OF HOMOGENEITY THAN PRESENTLY EXISTS IN AFRICA, AND CONSIDERABLY MORE EFFICIENT MACHINERY EVEN IF WILL TO ACT IN CONCERT COULD BE FOUND. NONETHELESS, FACT THAT MACHINERY IS INADEQUATE TO COPE DOES NOT MEAN WE SHOULD URGE AFRICANS TO HAVE RECOURSE TO US SECURITY COUNCIL IN PEACEKEEPING MATTERS. MANY THOUGHTFUL AFRI-
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CANS ARE PERFECTLY WELL AWARE OF INADEQUACIES OF OAU, BUT THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE PERSUADED THAT ANSWER IS TO BYPASS IT BY GOING STRAIGHT TO UN, WHICH IN VIEW OF MANY AFRICANS DOES NOT HAVE MUCH BETTER TRACK RECORD IN RESOLVING PEACEKEEPING MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THEM THAN DOES OAU, AND HAS DISADVANTAGE OF DIRECTLY INVOLVING EASTERN AND WESTERN POWER BLOCS. INDEED, DEEP AFRICAN SENSITIVITIES

SURFACE AT SUCH A SUGGESTION INCLUDING WHAT THEY WOULD SEE AS GLOBAL PERCEPTION OF AN INABILITY TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, THROUGH OAU, MANIFEST THOUGH THAT MIGHT BE.

3. RE SOVIETS AND CUBANS, THEIR SUCCESSES MORE OFTEN THAN NOT HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY LINKED TO IMMEDIATE SURVIVAL OF AN AFRICAN REGIME THREATENED FROM EITHER WITHIN OR WITHOUT OR BOTH, OFTEN IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE WEST AND/OR OTHER AFRICAN STATE HAVE BEEN EITHER UNABLE OR DISINCLINED PROVIDE COMPARABLE ASSISTANCE. TO LEADERS SUCH AS MENGISTU, FOR EXAMPLE, SURVIVAL IS POWERFUL MOTIVATING FORCE. FUTURE ROLE OF SOVIETS/CUBANS, POSSIBLE REACTIONS FROM WEST, AND INDEED, ULTIMATE STRUCTURE OF ETHIOPIAN STATE, ARE THINGS TO BE SORTED OUT WHEN ETHIOPIA (AND HE) IS SECURE, AND THEY ARE OF IMPORTANCE TO HIM NOW PRINCIPALLY IN TERMS OF THEIR IMPACT ON HIS OWN IMMEDIATE SITUATION. UNLESS WE ARE PREPARED TO TAKE CONSIDERABLY MORE ACTIVE ROLE THAN I THINK WE ARE, I SEE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT WE (OR LIKE-MINDED AFRICANS) WILL PERSUADE MENGISTUS OF AFRICA AND SOME OF THEIR PROGRESSIVE ALLIES THAT SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN IMMEDIATE SITUATIONS IS BAD THING. TO OTHERS SUCH AS BONGO, WHO FULLY SYMPATHETIC TO OUR CONCERNS, AND WHO IN HIS OWN LIMITED WAY HAS TAKEN SOME ACTION TO RESOLVE AN AFRICAN PROBLEM IN AN AFRICAN WAY, TRYING TO IMPRESS UPON HIM DANGER THAT AFRICAN MIGHT BECOME EAST-WEST COCKPIT WOULD BE CARRYING
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COALS TO NEWCASTLE. HIS REPLY WOULD BE (AND HAS BEEN), YESS I AGREE, WHAT CAN YOU DO MATERIALLY TO HELP US?

4. MAJORITY OF SUGGESTIONS REFTEL INVOLVE WHAT WE AS OUTSIDERS MIGHT DO TO HELP AFRICANS AND THEY ARE WORTH EXPLORING. INDEED, GREATEST CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS KEEP UP PRESSURE ON CUBANS AND SOVIETS IN VARIOUS FORA THAT NEED NOT BE AFRICAN. IF, HOWEVER, OUR PURPOSE IS TO GET AFRICANS TO SOLVE AFRICAN PROBLEMS, THEN IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE MUST BEGIN WITH EXISTING OAU MACHINERY AND EXAMINE IT TO SEE WHETHER THERE MAY BE SUGGESTIONS WE CAN MAKE TO AFRICANS THAT WOULD PERMIT THEM TO STRENGTHEN IT. ONE OF ITS MAJOR WEAKNESSES IS THAT PRESIDENT AND OAU SECRETARIAT CANNOT REALLY ACT IN RESPONSE TO A DEVELOPING CRISIS WITHOUT MANDATE FROM ANNUAL SUMMIT, MANDATES WHICH MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POLITICAL DIFFERENCES OF AFRICAN LEADERS AND WHICH TEND TO BE BLAND AND TOOTHLESS. IN THEORY AT LEAST, AND GENERALLY IN PRACTICE, PRESIDENT AND SECRETARIAT CANNOT REACT TO CRISES NOT COVERED IN MANDATE EXCEPT AT THEIR OWN PERIL OR UNLESS AD HOC CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING DEALS WITH SUBJECT (AND THESE HAVE BEEN NOTABLY RARE). BONGO'S

CALL FOR OAU SUPPORT OF SHABA IS CASE IN POINT. EXCEPT IN DEFENSE OF GENERALIZED CONCEPT OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IN OAU CHARTER, HE REALLY HAD NO BUSINESS MAKING APPEAL AND HAS ALREADY BEEN CRITICIZED FOR IT.

5. WHAT THIS SUGGESTS IS THAT SERIOUS-MINDED AFRICANS OUGHT TO TAKE CAREFUL LOOK AT OAU STRUCTURE TO SEE WHETHER IT MIGHT BE STRENGTHENED SO AS TO PERMIT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARIAT TO TAKE INITIATIVES THEY CANNOT NOW TAKE, I.E., APPOINT AD HOC COMMITTEES TO GRAPPLE WITH UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS PROPTLY, CREAT REGIONAL GROUPINGS AND GIVE THEM SOME AUTHORITY TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS IN THEIR OWN AREA, WITH OAU BACKING, OR PERHPS EVEN CREATE A MORE OR LESS PERMANENT MINI-SECURITY COUNCIL OF THEIR OWN.

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THEY MUST ALSO DEVOTE INCREASING ATTENTION TO IDEA OF AN AFRICAN MILITARY FORCE SUPPORTED BY THEMSELVES (AN UNLIKELY HAPPENING, BUT ONE I FEEL THEY WILL BE INCREASINGLY FORCED TO CONSIDER), AND THEY MUST, AS SUGGESTED REFTTEL, CREATE MEANINGFULL BODIES TO STUDY CRUCIAL PROBLEMS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES THAT ALL TOO OFTEN ARE ROOT CAUSE OF AFRICA'S PROBLEMS. NONE OF THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE EASY, TO SAY LEAST, BUT AS SEEN FROM HERE, IF WE WANT AFRICANS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THEY CREATE OR MODIFY THEIR OWN INSTITUTIONS TO PERMIT THEM TO DO SO. OUTSIDE WORLD INCLUDING USG CAN HELP ONLY TO DEGREE. TIENKEN

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